IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph at page 12, line 23 to page 13, line 3, with the following amended paragraph.

--Fig. 6 ~~shown~~ shows an example of an image signal of one line (during 1H). For the black offset correction value setting to be executed before the original read operation, an image signal (indicated by a broken line in Fig. 6) while a lamp is turned off is used. For the black offset correction value updating to be executed during the original read operation, a signal ~~during a~~ of non-image pixel portion ~~blanking period~~ (during a non-image period) is used.--

Please replace the paragraph at page 13, lines 10-13, with the following amended paragraph.

--Next, while the lamp is turned off, at Step 804 an average value K of pixel signals ~~during~~ of the non-image pixel ~~period~~ portion is calculated by the adder circuits 509 to 512.--

Please replace the paragraph at page 13, lines 16 to page 14, line 1, with the following amended paragraph.

--At step 806, while the lamp is turned on, an average value RK of pixel signals ~~during~~ of the non-image pixel ~~period~~ portion is calculated by the adder circuits 509 to 512. At Step 807 it is checked whether the period is a non-original reading period (a period from the end of reading one original to the start of reading another original). If during the non-original reading period, at Step 808 each of the black value offset setting registers 517 to 520 updates (changes) the black correction value to correct any change in the black correction value during reading the previous original and prevent a change in the image quality caused by such [[the]] change.--

Please replace the paragraph at page 14, lines 5-16, with the following amended paragraph.

--As shown in Fig. 6, there is a small level difference Δ (shown in Fig. 7) between the level of an image signal output from the effective pixels during a lamp turn-off state and the level of a signal output ~~during the non-image pixel period~~ from the non-image pixel portion. This difference results from the dark current in the pixels (photodiodes) in the CCD light reception area, which dark current is accumulated during the light reception period (accumulation time). However, the linear CCD sensor of the right/left division read type has a very short accumulation time because of a read operation at high speed. Therefore, this difference is almost constant.--

Please replace the paragraph at page 14, lines 17-20, with the following amended paragraph.

--Therefore, the black offset of an image signal can be corrected reliably by updating (changing) the black correction value by using signals output ~~during~~ from the non-image pixel portion ~~period~~.--

Please replace the paragraph at pages 14, line 21 to page 15, line 5, with the following amended paragraph.

--If a signal in a black reference pixel portion shown in Fig. 6 is used instead of using a signal from the non-image pixel portion, a precision of black correction may be lowered more or less because a signal from the black reference pixel portion contains, in many cases, clamp pulse noises (such as crosstalk from a clamp pulse) generated in an analog circuit such as a clamp circuit at the stage before the AD converters. If clamp pulse noises are not contained, a signal from the black reference pixel portion can be used for black correction at a high precision, similar to a signal from the non-image pixel portion.--